



THE MAKING OF MODERN KASHMIR

**SHEIKH ABDULLAH AND THE POLITICS
OF THE STATE**

Altaf Hussain Para



THE MAKING OF MODERN KASHMIR

This book traces the roots of modern-day Kashmir and the role of Sheikh Abdullah in its making. As the most influential political figurehead in twentieth-century Kashmir, he played a crucial role in its transformation from a kingdom to a state in independent India.

He was enigmatic and complex, to say the least. Following his meteoric rise, he dominated the political scene for more than 50 years, with enduring impact. The volume presents a keen analysis of pre-Independence events which led to the emergence of a controversial and confused identity of the region. It also looks at other major themes in the political life of Kashmir, including the formation of the Muslim Conference, the plebiscite movement and the Kashmir Accord.

A major intervention in the political life of South Asia, this book presents an inside-view of the history of modern Kashmir through the life and times of Sheikh Abdullah. It will be of great interest to scholars and researchers of politics, history, and modern South Asia.

Altaf Hussain Para teaches history at Cluster University of Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India. He has published papers in several reputed journals including *Economic and Political Weekly* besides being a regular contributor to the prominent local dailies like *Greater Kashmir*, *Kashmir Times*, *Rising Kashmir* and the weekly *Kashmir Life*.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

THE MAKING OF MODERN KASHMIR

Sheikh Abdullah and the Politics
of the State

Altaf Hussain Para

First published 2019
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an
informa business*

© 2019 Altaf Hussain Para

The right of Altaf Hussain Para to be identified as author
of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with
sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act
1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted
or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic,
mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter
invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any
information storage or retrieval system, without permission in
writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be
trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for
identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record has been requested for this book

ISBN: 978-1-138-22160-4 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-429-02357-6 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

TO MY PARENTS, ALI AND FATIMA



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>ix</i>
Introduction	1
1 Impact of a heartless treaty that sold an entire population	10
2 Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah: early life and ideological background	34
3 Harbinger of national consciousness: from Reading Room Party to Muslim Conference	43
4 Role as Muslim Conference president	63
5 Nationalization of a secular movement	76
6 Role as National Conference president: confronting with alternative voices	97
7 Accession: swimming against the tide?	122
8 In power (1947–1953): shaky foundations of a democratic edifice	158
9 Out of power: trapped in his own cage	197

CONTENTS

10	Accord: a lion made toothless	240
11	Regaining power: a shadow of his own	256
	Conclusion	279
	<i>Bibliography</i>	290
	<i>Index</i>	305

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude for the encouragement, assistance, and good wishes I have received from various people and institutions in researching and writing this volume.

First of all, I am grateful to my inspirational teacher, Professor Mohammed Ashraf Wani, for encouraging me to work on the theme. I am indebted to him for his unflagging support and inspiration. I am grateful also to the entire department of history, Kashmir University, for the support and encouragement.

My colleagues, friends, and well-wishers have over the years sustained me through the ups and downs of completing this daunting task. My heartfelt thanks to Professor Gulzar Ahmad Paddar, Mukhtar Ahmad, Javeed-ul-Aziz, Manzoor Ahmad, Rouf Majeed, Aijaz Ashraf, Prince, Yunus Rahid, Shabir Hussain Para, Ali Mohammed Bhat, and Sajjad Darzi, among many others, each of whom, in their individual ways, cheered me on during the course of my research. In particular, I acknowledge the support of my friend Bilal Ahmad Dar, a multidimensional personality who enormously helped me with his insights and valuable suggestions. My special thanks to all the people who accepted my request for interviews and who shared their private diaries, letters, and other valuable materials with me. I am especially thankful to Munshi Hassan who shared with me some extremely important documents about the Plebiscite Movement in Kashmir. Thanks to Professor Nyla Ali Khan, who does not know what is in this book and may well not agree with many of my observations, but still happily provided me two valuable photographs to be used in the South Asian edition of the book. Izzat Amin, my student with enormous talent in photography assisted me in the selection of cover photographs.

I wish to record my gratitude for the help I received from the staff of the following libraries and institutions: Seminar Library, Department of History, and Allama Iqbal Library, University of Kashmir;

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Department of Information, Srinagar; Indian Archives; The Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Srinagar and Jammu; The State Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar; Nehru Memorial Library and Museum, New Delhi; Sapru House Library, New Delhi; Central Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Indian Council for World Affairs; India International Center; Indian Council for Social Science Research; and Library, Amar Singh College Srinagar. I am also thankful to A.G. Noorani, a highly respected scholar on modern Kashmir, whose research has helped me a lot in understanding the controversial events of 1953 in Kashmir.

This work would not have been possible without the support of my family. My parents have been the most significant factor in shaping my views and vision. My wife, Gulshan Subeena, has been very tolerant and without her unflinching faith and love, I would not have had the courage to take on or complete this daunting work. I must also thank her for giving me an invaluable gift in the form of my daughter, Saadiyah Zynab. My sisters, Batool and Tahira, and my brother, Maqsood, provided a sense of perspective and humor rarely found in people; their ceaseless confidence and love for me have been a source of much comfort throughout this whole research process. My two nieces, Ronaq and Amara, and my nephew, Masroor, taught me the real meaning of struggle. While writing these lines, I remember with a heavy heart, my loving father-in-law, Gulshan Ghulam Hussain, who would have been the happiest person to see the volume had he not been consumed by death. May his soul rest in peace!

Finally, my sincere thanks to Routledge team, particularly Aakash Chakrabarty and Brinda Sen, for recognizing the merit of the work and seeing it through to print. Without their constant encouragement and expert guidance, I would have perhaps given up. Any shortcomings that remain are entirely mine.

INTRODUCTION

Although Thomas Carlyle's bold assertion that "the history of the world is but the biography of great men"¹ does not go unchallenged, the fact remains, however, that great men do not simply represent the social forces but they also mold and create them. They make the dead facts speak and, thus, convert sentiments into movements. Moreover, there is no absolute possibility of subject-free objectivity while deciphering the pages of the past and personalities. But while one studies what Fredrick Nietzsche terms as "monumental history",² one comes across the dangerous paradigm which makes us hold such personalities above – like Greek gods – the social and political factors in which they acted and were acted upon. History and historical laws, if any, do not work out their programs as machines or computers do. If historical episteme and structures determine the response of human societies and individuals *a priori*, equally, great men resist and try to mold the course of these structures. That is why one historical epoch differs from another in its responses to the basic human condition and in establishing new institutions of human power and perception. Therefore, it is safe to argue that great men are both the products as well as the creators of history. As Herbert Spencer has very rightly observed:

You must admit that the genesis of the great man depends on the long series of complex influences which has produced the race in which he appears, and the social state into which that race has slowly grown . . . Before he can remake his society, his society must make him.³

Kashmir society and its personality, like other societies of the world, have been, from the very beginning, guided and molded by some extraordinary characters. Be it the great rulers, like Lalitadatiya, Aventivarman, and Zain-ul-Aabdin, or religious and social reformers,

like Lalla Ded, Mir Syed Hamdani, and Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Rishi, all of these have influenced the history of Kashmir and have molded its psyche from time to time. Likewise, a considerable part of the twentieth century of Kashmir history was overwhelmingly influenced by one person, namely Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah (1905–1982), who spearheaded the political, social, and economic modernization of the state. He launched a movement for democracy in the state on secular principals with its basic objective to achieve economic, political, and gender equality of his people.

An eminent scholar and journalist, M.J. Akbar rightly regards Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah as the architect of modern Kashmir, saying, “The modern history of Kashmir begins with the greatest Kashmiri of modern times, Sheikh Abdullah”.⁴ He was the most enigmatic and complex political leader of Kashmir. He had a meteoric rise to the top slot of Kashmir politics and continued to dominate the political scene for more than 50 years with enduring impact. However, notwithstanding his abiding contribution, perhaps no other person has become as controversial as has the Sheikh. There are two main reasons behind this. First is Sheikh Abdullah’s own split personality. His frequent U-turns and adherence to various divergent ideologies and agendas has made it all the more difficult to analyze his historical role. For example, on the one hand he organized a mass movement against the autocratic and feudal socio-political setup and became a vocal advocate of civil rights and social democracy; on the other hand there is ample evidence to show his autocratic and intolerant behavior against those who disagreed with his political views. Likewise, on the one side he facilitated Kashmir’s accession with India and became its strongest champion at different levels; on the other side he patronized a movement spreading over 22 years, using all his abilities and mobilizing tactics to undo that accession.

There is also a contradiction in what Sheikh Abdullah advocated in public discourses and what he advocated privately. In February 1948, he made a long and impassioned speech in the Security Council justifying Kashmir’s complete accession with India and demonizing Pakistan,⁵ as he did in an equally eloquent speech to the inaugural session of Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly in 1951. However, in private discourses with Patrick Gordon Walker, under-secretary of state in the Commonwealth Relations Office, in 1948⁶ and Loy Henderson, US ambassador in Delhi, in 1950, he had shown great reservations about the accession with India.⁷ Thus, his paradoxical approach towards many historical events which had shaped the modern Kashmir history has made Sheikh Abdullah a controversial political figure.

The second reason, which makes Sheikh Abdullah's role in the emergence of modern Kashmir a controversial and confusing one, is the lack of independent research on him and a general tendency of scholars to study his different roles in isolation. There are more than 400 works that wholly or in part examine the history of modern Kashmir and profusely quote Sheikh Abdullah. But there is hardly any scholarly work which gives a detailed account about the role played by this man who dominated the political scene of Kashmir since 1930. The frequent mention of Sheikh Abdullah by modern writers on Kashmir history is no doubt commonplace; but the treatment drowns him in the sea of myriad facts of time rather than presenting him as a moving spirit behind the course of a tumultuous century in the history of Kashmir.

Moreover, those who have produced works on Sheikh Abdullah have followed what can be termed as an *exclusivist* approach. They have studied the Sheikh's role in watertight compartments and sometimes in isolation. This exclusivity has given birth to different divergent and diametrically opposing perspectives on Sheikh Abdullah. Some writers, like P.N. Koul, Balraj Puri, and M.J. Akbar, who had studied Abdullah through the prism of *Kashmiriat*, have attempted to project him more as a life leader. The majority of historians, including Prem Nath Bazaz, Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, Alistair Lamb, Mohammad Sultan Pampori, and others who analyze his role through the logics of Partition, hold him responsible for the political uncertainty in the state. Still others, like A.G. Noorani, Ajit Bhattacharjea, Sumantra Bose, and Prem Shankar Jha, see him as a Kashmiri nationalist who had a deep urge to restore the identity of Kashmir, but because of his lack of vision and political skills and the Indian state's inability to respect his autonomous urge, he embroiled himself in a situation from which he could not emerge.

Voluminous works have been produced on the 'Kashmir Freedom Movement'. Some of them are quite exhaustive. There can be no denying that books on the freedom struggle by Prem Nath Bazaz (*The History of the Struggle for the Freedom, Cultural, and Political: From the Earlier Times to the Present Day*, Pamposh Publications, New Delhi 1954), Mohammad Yusuf Saraf (*Kashmiris Fight for Freedom*, 2 Vols., Ferozsons, Lahore, 1977 and 1979), and Abdul Rasheed Taseer (*Tarikh-i-Hurriyat-i-Kashmir*, Muhafiz Publications, Srinagar, 1966) are comprehensive, but they suffer from subjectivity on one count or another. Bazaz's work lacks credibility for his deep-seated bias against the Sheikh and his politics, which is also true of Saraf's book. Abdul Rasheed Taseer's work is just a sympathetic narration of political

events and personalities. Gulam Hassan Khan's book *Freedom Movement in Kashmir 1931–1940* (Light and Life Publishers, New Delhi, 1980) is an independent research work based on primary sources, but covers only a very short period, from 1931 to 1939.

Sheikh Abdullah's death in 1982 was followed by the appearance of two short biographies on him written by two political activists who claim to have a very close association with Abdullah. The first was a collection of speeches and lectures delivered by Balraj Puri in the University of Kashmir, under the title *Abdullah's Era* (Kashmir University, 1983), and the second was by R.N. Koul, titled *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah: A Political Phoenix* (Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1985). These books are very brief and contain no more than personal observations and a homage by the authors. While the former is more concerned with underlining his own role than of Sheikh Abdullah's, the latter centers his observations on projecting the Sheikh as an upholder of secularism and superficially touches upon the real contribution he made to the state. In any case, these works serve as very useful source material.

Sheikh Abdullah's autobiography, *Aatish-i-Chinar* (Ali Mohammad & Sons, Srinagar), written in the Urdu language, first appeared in 1985, three years after its author's death. Although it was the first comprehensive account of the Sheikh's long political career, the narration of certain events make it highly doubtful. The treatment given to some personalities, namely Bakshi Gulam Mohammad, G.M. Sadiq, Mohi-ud-Din Qarra, and Moulana Masoodi, is both harsh and contradictory. Moreover, no part of this posthumous manuscript has been put in final form by the author during his lifetime. Certainly, it is more an interpretation of the notes by the editor/s than an autobiography in the strictest sense.⁸ Also, its editor, Mohammad Yusuf Tang, frankly admits the limitations of the work, saying that he was not allowed to include some sensitive issues in the book because of its expected publication in the lifetime of Sheikh Abdullah. Besides, he also admits the lack of knowledge of historical methodology, which is so important for writing on a personality who is at once the product as well as the creator of history.⁹

India: The Siege Within (Viking, Delhi, 1985) by M.J. Akbar is a well-crafted account of developments between 1947 and 1982. In his second book, *Kashmir: Behind the Vale* (Roli Books, Delhi, 1991), Akbar updates the story to the current insurgency in the state. He observes events through a new prism, *Kashmiriat*—an extension of the nationalist discourse. After exploring the historical roots of synthesis, Akbar discusses the modern period. Given his intense dislike

for religious nationalism, the list of heroes and villains is predictable. From his accounts, Nehru and Abdullah emerge as heroes, their greatness dwarfing their mistakes. These are journalistic accounts, albeit excellent.

During the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the present century many historians, political commentators, and journalists have published a plethora of books on ‘the accession story’, ‘the role of United Nations’, ‘Indo-Pak relations’, and the ongoing militancy in Kashmir.¹⁰ These books only occasionally refer to the role played by Sheikh Abdullah. Also, most of these accounts begin their tales from 1947, thus leaving an important phase, which begins from the 1930s, unaddressed.

The recent addition to the literature written on Sheikh Abdullah is Ajit Bhattacharjee’s *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah: Tragic Hero of Kashmir* (Roli Books, New Delhi, 2008). The book encompasses not only the 50-year political career of Sheikh Abdullah, but documents the contemporary history of Kashmir in lucid style. True, it is a journalistic account of a controversial political leader of Kashmir and suffers for details, but the book gives a panoramic view of the Kashmir political scene during the Dogra rulers and after. The book in many places looks like an English version of Sheikh Abdullah’s autobiography, *Aatish-i-Cinar*. On the issue of ‘accession’, the author has preferred to cling to the official version. Likewise, the author has looked at the 1953 happenings from the populist point of view, ignoring the more subtle reasons for the removal of Sheikh Abdullah. The book, in reality, is not a candid account of Abdullah’s political role but a sympathetic biography.

Indeed, most of the works on the Sheikh are compiled to serve some particular ideologies and agendas, and have thus become victims of pre-determinism. Besides, these histories, which are based mostly on official documents of state and political parties, give us an official version of events, neglecting popular perspectives. I have attempted to transcend this limitation by adding to the existing source base by drawing from the Kashmiri, Urdu, and English languages, both oral and written. The sources that have been used include private diaries, letters, unpublished manuscripts of poetry and polemical writings, published political and social pamphlets, memoirs, biographies and autobiographies, newspapers, folk narratives, oral histories and interviews, and state archival records.

It may not be out of place to mention here that although with the publication of *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* enlightening some dark corners around the incidents of 1953, one still feels handicapped

on two counts while working on Sheikh Abdullah. First, Indian archives related to the relationship of Jammu and Kashmir with the Indian state still remain closed except to favored scholars. Second, much of the literature and documents related to the period between 1953 and 1975 during which Abdullah patronized a most crucial movement – *Tahrikh-i-Rai-Shumari* (plebiscite movement) – were destroyed after its patron signed an accord in 1975 with Indira Gandhi and disowned the two-decade long movement as political waywardness. Also, while there are separate papers of important political figures available for research like *Nehru Papers*, *Jinnah Papers*, and so on, in Abdullah's case one has still to wait. I have tried to fill this gap to some extent by conducting interviews from different shades of opinions.

The chapters of this study are broadly chronological and thematic. Chapter 1 examines the nature of the state founded by Maharaja Gulab Singh under the tutelage of the English East India Company and how it interacted with different sections of the society. It also examines the causes and impact of British intervention in the state after 1885 which, in the absence of a democratic state apparatus, created a fractured modernity, thus adding to the miseries of the disadvantaged on the one hand, and creating conditions for the emergence of an educated and politically conscious middle class on the other, who, in the absence of a sufficient space to flourish, confronted the state.

Chapter 2 throws light on the early life and ideological background of Sheikh Abdullah. It examines the influences, both internal and external, which shaped his political vision. I have contested a general perception that the Sheikh entered politics by accident because he was denied a suitable job. With ample substantiation, I have argued that Abdullah had developed a taste for politics way before the events of 1931.

Chapter 3 discusses the emergence of a new educated middle class with political ambitions in Kashmir and looks into the causes which led to the emergence of Abdullah as the most dominant political figure. It also highlights the process of the spread of political consciousness in the state and how the feudal state responded to the infant currents of nationalism.

Chapter 4 deals with the role of Sheikh Abdullah in the establishment of an organized political struggle, to fight against feudal autocracy and for the establishment of a responsible government, under the banner of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. Besides studying the nature and program of the organization, this chapter also deals with the overall impact of the organization on the socio-political and administrative setup of the state and society.

Chapter 5 examines the process of transformation of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference and its subsequent impact on the national movement. Whereas it is a common assertion that transformation was a brainchild of Prem Nath Bazaz and the process was accelerated by Pandit Nehru, the study argues that the movement led by Sheikh Abdullah was secular from its very inception. Thus, while Bazaz and Nehru strengthened Abdullah's hand in the process of conversion, it was basically Abdullah's urge to free himself from the influence of Punjabi Muslim elite and also to neutralize the vocal non-Muslim Kashmiri Pundits, which led to the change of the name. In this chapter, I have also traced the roots of the rift between Abdullah and Mohammed Ali Jinnah from 1939 instead of 1944, as most of the narratives lead us to believe.

Chapter 6 examines the role of Sheikh Abdullah as the leader of National Conference from 1939 to 1947. Why did the Sheikh fail to attract non-Muslims to join his organization? Why did he come under sharp criticism from his Muslim following? Why did the revived Muslim Conference fail to capitalize on the growing discontentment against the Sheikh? What was the nature and impact of the New Kashmir Manifesto? Why did the Sheikh launch the Quit Kashmir movement? And what was its overall impact on Kashmir politics? These are the main questions dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 7 is an account of Sheikh Abdullah's role in Kashmir's accession with India. The questions analyzed include, Was Sheikh Abdullah able to anticipate the Partition? What was his idea about the position of princely states in free India? What kind of accession he was pleading for? Did he succeed in mobilizing public opinion in favor of his decision to accede to India? Why immediately after facilitating accession to India did he begin to regret his decision and what impact did this have on the future political developments in the state?

Chapter 8 revolves around three questions. First, to what extent did the Sheikh's government succeeded in implementing the Naya Kashmir Manifesto? Second, how did the relationship between the Jammu and Kashmir with the Indian Union and between the different provinces within the state evolve? And third, which major structural changes were introduced in the state and how were these responded to by society?

Chapter 9 examines why Sheikh Abdullah, the hero of Kashmiri nationalism and the chief architect of the state's accession to India, was dismissed from power and then imprisoned; why he patronized the two-decade-long plebiscite movement challenging the legal and

moral basis of the accession; how the Indian state responded to the Sheikh's secessionist tendencies; and what impact the movement left on Kashmir's mass psyche.

Chapter 10 examines the circumstances and forces at work that influenced Abdullah to sign an accord with the Indian prime minister, Indira Gandhi, and to disown the plebiscite movement. I have also critically examined the terms of the 1975 Accord and its impact on the future course of politics in the state.

Chapter 11 studies the role of Sheikh Abdullah as chief minister of the state. Why did his relationship with central authorities again come under stress? How, even after compromising his long-held political stand, did he still win the 1977 election with an impressive margin? How far did he succeed in introducing good governance in the state, and with what consequences?

This study ends with a brief conclusion that summarizes the contributions made and the legacies left behind by Sheikh Abdullah, with the hope that it will help people understand the present state of affairs in the conflict-ridden Jammu and Kashmir often referred as a 'nuclear flashpoint' in South Asia.

A note of caution: The word 'modern' used in the title which subsequently appears at many places in the same context has been basically used in the sense of periodization rather than in the developmental sense; however, at other places it also conveys certain features of political modernization – democracy, secularism, gender and economic equality, constitution – in the state as well. Also I want to make it clear that the study mainly revolves round the role played by Sheikh Abdullah in the making (or unmaking, or both) of modern Kashmir. Therefore, and naturally so, the main focus has remained the Valley of Kashmir only as it served Abdullah's main constituency and the base of operation and also as a province where his legacy is now being contested. References with regard to other areas of the state have been made only where the context demanded.

Notes

- 1 See Thomas Carlyle, "The hero as divinity", *Heroes and Hero Worship*, James Fraser, London, 1841.
- 2 History of individuals who become historical by their willingness and risk and thus, may become inspirational and provide an antidote to weariness.
- 3 Robert L. Carneiro, "Herbert Spencer as an anthropologist", *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, vol. 5, 1981, pp. 171–172.
- 4 M.J. Akbar, *Kashmir: Behind the Vale*, Roli Books, New Delhi, 1991, p. xii.

5 Sheikh Abdullah said,

I had thought all along [pointing to the tribal invasion] that the world had got rid of Hitlers. . . , but from what is happening in my poor country, I am convinced they have transmigrated their souls into Pakistan . . . The [plebiscite] offer [was] made by the Prime Minister of India when, I think, he had not the slightest need for making it, for Kashmir was in distress . . . I refuse to accept Pakistan as a party in the affairs of Jammu and Kashmir; I refuse this point blank.

Quoted in Ashutosh Varshney, "Three compromised nationalisms", in Raju J.C. Thomas (ed.), *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia*, Westview Press, 1992, pp. 194–195.

- 6 See the telegram from the British High Commissioner in India to London, dated 11 February 1948. It quotes Abdullah as saying, "the solution was that Kashmir should accede to both Dominions . . ."; for more details see Chapter 7 on Accession.
- 7 Loy Henderson wrote to the US Secretary of State on 19 September 1950: "while in Kashmir, I had two secret discussions with Sheikh Abdullah . . . at his request. He was vigorous in restating that in his opinion (Kashmir) should be independent, that overwhelming majority population desire this independence". *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948*, vol. v, pt I, Washington, DC, 1975, pp. 1433–1435.
- 8 I am indebted to Dr. Sheikh Showket for informing me that it was Prof. Aal Ahmad Saroor, an expert in *Iqbaliyat*, who gave the final shape to the script of the Abdullah, *Aatish-i-Chinar*.
- 9 See Sheikh Abdullah, *Aatish-i-Chinar*, Foreword by M.Y. Tang, for his views.
- 10 Although the number of these books run into the hundreds, some of the main works include Alistair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy*, Rexford Books, Hertfordshire, 1991, Ajit Bhattacharjea, *Kashmir: A Wounded Valley*, New Delhi, 1994, Prem Shankar Jha, *Kashmir 1947: Rival Versions of History*, New Delhi, 1996, Mushtaqur Rehman, *Divided Kashmir: Old Problems New Opportunities for India, Pakistan and Kashmir People*, Boulder: US, 1996, Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in the Crossfire*, London, 1996, Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portent of War, Hopes of Peace*, Cambridge, 1997, Manooj Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion: Kashmir in the Nineties*, New Delhi, 1999, Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*, Harvard, 2003. Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam Regional Identity and the Making of Kashmir*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2003, Mirda Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights and the History of Kashmir*, Delhi, 2004, Navnita Chedda Behra, *Demystifying Kashmir*, New Delhi, 2007, David Devadas, *In Search of a Future: The Story of Kashmir*, New Delhi, 2007.

IMPACT OF A HEARTLESS TREATY THAT SOLD AN ENTIRE POPULATION

The state of Jammu and Kashmir owes its origin to the Treaty of Amritsar (16 August 1846) concluded between the British East India Company and the Gulab Singh, a Jammu-based Dogra chieftain of the Sikh kingdom of Punjab. The Treaty was in itself a by-product of the Treaty of Lahore (9 August 1846), concluded to end the first Anglo-Sikh war which left the Sikh state of Maharaja Ranjit Singh only a shadow of its original self. The Dogras had established themselves as rulers of Jammu in the declining years of the imperial Mughal Empire but as feudatories of the Sikh kingdom. In 1834, Gulab Singh conquered the hilly terrains of Ladakh and followed with the conquest of Baltistan in 1840. Meanwhile, the East India Company coveted the prosperous Punjab after the death of Ranjit Singh and the weakening of the Sikh state. When hostilities broke out, Gulab Singh Dogra, true to his form, betrayed his Sikh masters and allied himself secretly with the British, whom he rightly anticipated would be the future masters of the whole of India.¹

The Treaty of Lahore reduced the Sikh state to a British tributary. The Company imposed on it an indemnity of rupees one and half crores, which its governor-general, Hardinge, was clearly aware that the Sikhs would be unable to pay.² Since it could not pay, it ceded the territories between the Beas and Indus rivers, including Kashmir Valley and Hazara occupied by Ranjit Singh in 1919. Article XII of the Treaty was inserted as a prelude to the Treaty of Amritsar and to describe Gulab Singh's treachery to his masters with exquisite delicacy:

In consideration of the services rendered by Raja Golab Singh of Jummo to the Lahore State, towards procuring the restoration of the relations of amity between the Lahore and British Governments, the Maharaja hereby agrees to recognize

the Independent Sovereignty of Raja Golab Singh, in such territories and districts in the hills as may be made over to the said Raja Golab Singh by separate agreement between himself and the British Government.

That separate agreement was the Treaty of Amritsar signed only after a week through which the British transferred the territories ceded from the Sikh state to Gulab Singh for rupees 75 lakhs, with the British directly occupying Kalu and Manali. Thus came into existence the state of Jammu and Kashmir formed through inheritance, conquest, purchase, and British blessings. Later on, some other small but distinct political entities were added to the state. The most significant was the Gilgit Agency, which the British attached to the state for political convenience in 1889, and which the Dogras leased back to them in 1935. In addition, Poonch came under the formal control of the state in 1936. Thus, a group of otherwise unrelated tracts were combined to form a princely state, which had nothing in common except an autocratic ruler imposed on it, purely for political considerations. In the words of the Australian legal expert Sir Owen Dixon, who led a UN mission to mediate between India and Pakistan on Kashmir, "the state of Jammu and Kashmir is not really a unit geographically, demographically or economically, it is an agglomeration of territories brought under the political power of one Maharaja [Gulab Singh]. That is the unity it possesses".³

Without going into the details of the motives behind the Treaty of Amritsar or the subsequent carving out of a new princely state under Gulab Singh, suffice to say that the "creation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir in 1846 flowed from the geo-political and strategic considerations of the East India Company in the critical North-Western Frontier of its expanding Indian dominion"⁴ rather than merely "rewarding . . . Gulab Singh's treachery to the Lahore State" as suggested by some analysts.⁵ Although, Hardinge rated Gulab Singh as 'a rascal',⁶ he found in him sufficient ability to act as a buffer between British Indian territories and the threatening Afghans and Russia, thus relieving the Company from the compulsion of undertaking the expansive defense of the crucial northwestern frontier on its own.

The imposition of the Dogra dynasty of Jammu on the people of Kashmir Valley, with a predominantly Muslim population, through the colonial machination, was a negatively unique phenomenon for Kashmiris mainly for three reasons. First, although the people of the Valley had been consistently ruled, since the Mughal occupation of it

in 1586, by the dynasts who had their centers of power outside Kashmir, they (at least some sections of Kashmiris) were always involved, in one way or the other, in the process of change, either by way of sending invitations to or serving as local collaborators of the occupying forces. But in the case of the Dogra occupation of the Kashmir, all new arrangements were made without the knowledge of Kashmiris and least with their consent.

Second, unlike its Mughal, Afghan, and Sikh predecessors, the Dogra monarchs with their base at Jammu were ruling from a culturally lesser-known region as compared to the Valley with a very rich cultural past and a well-documented civilizational background. It may be for this reason that Dogras consciously imposed inhuman practices on the Kashmiris (like *begar*[forced labor], organized prostitution, and unarming them to reduce their marshal spirit, to mention only a few) with an intention to dehumanize them and reduce their cultural level.

Third, unlike their predecessors, Dogra monarchs were not sovereigns in the strict sense of the term, rather they were vassals of another mightier power – British colonialists – as is clear from Article X of the Treaty of Amritsar. Thus, the people of the Valley were supposed to show their allegiance to two masters – the Dogras and the British. It was double imperialism.

The Treaty of Amritsar was, by all standards, a sale deed – albeit concluded under the shadow of politics and serving purely the political interests of the parties concerned. Justice A.S. Anand, a legal luminary and formerly the chief justice of India, in his seminal treatise on the constitutional history of Jammu and Kashmir, concluded after thoroughly cross-examining the arguments regarding the nature of the Treaty: “when you accept money in consideration for a transfer of a material thing, the transaction is nothing but ‘sale’ ”.⁷ Dr. Sir Mohammed Iqbal, the philosopher-poet of the early twentieth century, who was of Kashmiri descent and the early mentor of the nationalist leadership of Kashmir, while expressing grief concerning the Treaty, wrote the following:

*Their fields, their crops, their streams
Even the peasants in the Vale
They sold all
Alas, how cheap was the sale.*⁸

Also, the famous Urdu poet, Hafiz Jallendhuri, whose poems were frequently chanted and which moved the spirits of the Kashmiri people

during their struggle for democracy against the autocratic Dogra monarchy, wrote an elegy, lamenting the Treaty, which reads:

*The fate of Human beings was sold for Rs seventy-five lakhs
Kashmir's paradise was sold for Rs seventy-five lakhs*

The inhumane Treaty left a deep scar on the Kashmiri mass psyche which, even after a lapse of more than one-and-a-half centuries, refuses to heal. Kashmiris were lacking both the leadership and the means to resist the imposition of the Treaty, but they were not lacking the desire. Thus, when last Sikh governor of Kashmir, Sheikh Immamudin, refused to submit, Kashmiris threw their lot behind him, which sustained his revolt against the combined Dogra-British-Sikh forces for months together. Captain Arthur Broome, who was deputed to oversee the transfer of power to Gulab Singh, confirmed Sheikh Immamudin's impressively wide base of support in Kashmir and suggested that he had "the chief power in the country and the popular feeling . . . [was] with him".⁹ Thus Immamudin, with popular support on his side and rich resources of the Valley at his disposal, managed to inflict a crushing defeat to the Dogra army, and Gulab Singh's representative, Lakpat Rai, was killed. The Treaty was enforced with the help of British arms. It was only when British troops along with Sikh forces marched to the Valley that Immamudin surrendered and Gulab Singh was installed as the new ruler on an unwilling subject population. It may not seem surprising then that a century later, in 1946, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah proudly recalled Immamudin's revolt in the court, where he was tried for sedition for launching the Quit Kashmir movement, which challenged the very basis of the Treaty and, hence, the moral right of the Dogras to rule over Kashmir.

As the turbulence of the first quarter of the twentieth century swept across India, and the demand for freedom and self-rule became a stirring revolution under the new leadership of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Kashmir too began to rise against its insensitive and autocratic Dogra monarchs. Although Kashmir had been ruled by the foreign mercenaries and adventurers for centuries,¹⁰ the Dogra rule was unique in the sense that they were themselves the vassals of another mightier power, i.e. British colonialists. British imperialism, although parasitic in nature, generated certain institutionalized forces which brought about a transition from the ruler-centered medievalism to a modern law-centered state system in the territories directly governed by it. This was not, however, the case with "Dogra imperialism",

which was more parasitic but less progressive in nature, and it continued “the dynastic, feudal, ruler-centered and religion centered rule of the medieval ages”.¹¹ Taking advantage of the “sale-deal of 1846”, the Dogra rulers considered Kashmir as their purchased property¹² and ruled over their subjects as a master rules over his slaves.¹³ High principles of governance were unknown to them, and the state which they created remained personal and feudal in character. They always discriminated against the province of Kashmir in particular, considering it a conquered land, and relatively preferred Jammu, their homeland.¹⁴ The Dogra state, which perpetuated regionalism, followed, however, more discriminatory policy vis-à-vis the majority community of Kashmir – Muslims – a fact which is attested by almost all contemporary sources.¹⁵ P.L. Lakhanpal summarized the communal behavior of Dogra rulers by saying, “the sale-deal of 1846 put a largely populated Muslim state under the Dogra rule which had been characterized as despotic, tyrannical and sectarian”.¹⁶ Like true medieval despots, the Dogras deliberately propagated the policy of racial discrimination against the Muslims in particular and other non-Dogra communities in general. Gawasha Lal Koul, though being very well disposed towards the maharaja, remarked about Gulab Singh’s successor: “Maharaja Pratab Singh would say, ‘do not give too much to Rajputs, use Kashmiri Pundits as much as you can and see that Muslims do not starve’”.¹⁷

Muslims, who constituted roughly around 80 percent of the total population of the state, had only a nominal share in the government services,¹⁸ and as per the *Riots Enquiry Committee Report*, the share of the Muslims in the state services in 1931 was not more than 15 percent.¹⁹ Every deliberate attempt was made to keep the Muslims away from the important and influential positions.²⁰ The economic policies adopted by the Dogra state ruined the largest producing community, Muslims, although the non-Muslim minority was not an exception. The revenue department, which was throughout monopolized by the non-Muslims and which had most of its dealings with the Muslim masses, was the most corrupt and oppressive organ of the autocratic state machinery.²¹ The taxation policy adopted by the state was very harsh and badly executed, which left the working class half-fed and starving.²² European travelers and officials who visited the state, some of whom had served in the Valley during Dogra rule and were more conscious of the material aspect, left behind revealing information regarding the economic life of the people and the state’s policies. Lieutenant Colonel Torrens, who visited Kashmir in 1859–60, detested

Dogra state as essentially a 'Hindu rule'. While comparing the Dogras with the early foreign rulers of Kashmir, he wrote,

this last state [Dogra State] was worse than the first . . . for Gulab Singh went beyond his predecessors in the gently acts of undue taxation and extortion. They had taxed heavily it is true, but he sucked the very lifeblood of the people. They had laid violent hands on a large proportion of the fruits of the earth, the profits of loom and the work of men's hands, but he skinned the very flints to fill his coffers.²³

The taxation system was not only corrupt and harsh but inhuman as well. Almost all types of produce and all classes associated with process of production were brought under heavy taxation, as has been stated by Sir Francis Younghusbad, a keen observer of the developments, in the following words:

On the manufacture of shawls, parallel restrictions were placed, wool was taxed as it entered Kashmir; the manufacture was taxed for every workman he employed, and also at various stages of the process according to the value of fabric: Lastly there was the enormous duty of 85% *ad valorem*. Butchers, bakers, carpenters, boatmen, and even prostitutes were taxed. Poor coolies, who were engaged to carry load for travelers, had to give up half their earnings.²⁴

The nature of taxation would become more oppressive and devastating for peasantry and other working classes when one considers the fact that revenue officials were highly corrupt. They not only maltreated the masses, but they also fattened themselves on illegal exactions, known as *nazrana* and *rasum*, imposed on the poor peasantry.²⁵ Those officials, in order to make their pockets bulge and to please their masters, resorted to extreme and inhuman torturous methods to extract as much as they could from the helpless peasantry:

At the time of collecting the land revenue, the use of nettle scourge in summer and of plunging recurrent tax payer into cold water in winter were popular methods of torture carried out against the peasants. Through these corrupt practices and oppressive methods of the revenue department, the Muslim cultivators suffered unspeakable injustice and oppression.²⁶

It is therefore no surprise that the mere sight of an official's visit to any village caused all hell to break loose among its dwellers. This fact is also substantiated by the great revenue expert who surveyed every place in the state, Walter Lawrence, when he wrote:

the official visit, which to us officials seems so pleasant to all concerned, sends the pulse of the village up many degrees, and those are happy who dwell for away from the beaten tracks. . . . He has good reasons to hate and distrust them.²⁷

These oppressive economic policies of the government had created deplorable economic conditions in the state, forcing people to flee to British Indian territories for alternative jobs in order to feed their starving families and to pay their dues to the government. Walter Lawrence, a contemporary participant observe, has depicted the bankruptcy of the state policy in the following words:

the rich land was left uncultivated and the army was employed in forcing the villagers to plough and sow, and worse still the soldiers came at the harvest time and when the share of the state had been seized and these men of war had helped themselves, there was very little given to the unfortunate peasants to tide over the cruel winter when the snow lies deep and temperature falls below zero.²⁸

The great revenue expert of his time recorded that when he started settlement of the land at the end of the nineteenth century, everything save air and water was under taxation. He observed that even the office of the gravedigger was taxed.²⁹

It is thus not surprising that the vitality of the people had been extremely undermined and the state witnessed successive famines, epidemics, and choleras in 1877–1879, 1888, 1892, 1900–1902, 1906–1907, and 1910 and an outbreak of plague in 1903–1904, which substantially decimated the productive population.³⁰ The famine of 1877–79 was the most destructive. The death toll from the famine had been overwhelming by any standards. Some authorities had suggested that the population of Srinagar had been reduced by half (from 127,400 to 60,000), while others had estimated a diminution by three fifths of the population of the entire Valley.³¹ The famine had brought to light the apathy of the administration, the inadequacy of the protection offered to Kashmiri cultivators, and the oppressive agrarian arrangements of the Dogra state. Interestingly, according to reports

received by Lawrence, not a single non-Muslim died of starvation during these annihilative years for the Muslim subjects. Yet, more surprisingly, Wazir Punnu, Pundit prime minister during these famine years, is said to have declared that there “was not real distress and that he wished that no *Musalman* might be left alive from Srinagar to Ramban (in Jammu)”. It justified incidents of extreme cruelty towards Muslim cultivators, including the humiliation of stripping them naked for their failure to pay revenue.³²

The worst was still to come in the form of *Begar* (forced labor without or with meager compensation).³³ In theory, though, *Beger* had been abolished in 1893, but in practice it persisted, particularly in remoter districts, right up to 1947 in one form or another. The continuance of *Bagar* and the suffering caused by it to the masses (particularly Muslims) is substantiated even by the *Glancy Commission Report* of 1932:

Complaints have been received that not un often the government officials disobey the orders of his Highness and force the villagers to carry the loads of the officials to far-off places without any remuneration. As a matter of fact they exact other kinds of unpaid services from them.³⁴

The economic suppression deteriorated the Kashmiri masses both physically and intellectually, and the cultural level of the Valley had gone down considerably.³⁵

The state not only discriminated against the Kashmiri masses on the economic front, but what proved more crucial was that it also played with their religious sensibilities, which provided fuel to the fire and provoked the Muslim masses to raise the banner of revolt against the Dogra autocracy in 1931. Regarding the communal nature of the state, Prem Nath Bazaz had observed:

Speaking generally and from the bourgeois point of view, the Dogra rule has been a *Hindu Raj*. Muslims have not been treated fairly by which I mean as fairly as the Hindus. Firstly because, contrary to all professions of treating all classes equally, it must be candidly admitted, that Muslims were dealt with harshly in certain respects only because they were Muslims.³⁶

Until 1934, for example, the slaughter of a cow was a capital offense, and it continued to be forbidden under larger penalty after that date.³⁷ Very often, a person convicted of killing a cow was “boiled

in oil and then hung from a hook which was fixed on to a pole in a public place".³⁸ Hindus alone were allowed licenses to possess fire-arms in the Valley of Kashmir, and the Muslims from the vale were carefully excluded from service in the state's armed forces, where the higher ranks were reserved for Dogra Rajputs. Muslim troops in the Jammu and Kashmir state forces were mainly recruited from the *Sudhans* of Poonch, a military clan which the maharaja believed could be relied upon to suppress any 'disorder' in the Valley.³⁹ Dogras promulgated a law according to which if any Muslim would embrace Hinduism he was allowed to inherit property and enjoy guardianship over his children, whereas when any Hindu became a Muslim, he was deprived of all such rights.⁴⁰ Muslim masses were also subjected to paying a marriage tax on every marriage that took place in their families.⁴¹

The Dogra regime didn't hesitate to interfere even in the administration of Muslim shrines and institutions, to which the subject population was emotionally attached and where they would find some kind of solace in the most depressing times. No care was given to the religious sensitivities of the Muslims when many historical mosques and shrines were confiscated by the state and some of them were even converted into granaries and ammunition storehouses of the state. No wonder then that we see the restoration of the confiscated religious places forming an important demand from Muslim leaders in the Memorandum that they submitted to Lord Reading, Governor General of India, during his visit to the Valley in 1924.⁴²

In political, economic, and social conditions such as these created by the Dogra Raj, it was easy for a Muslim leader to rouse the patriotic and religious sentiments of the whole community against the oppressive rule and to challenge its legitimacy to govern over its subject population majority, which was discriminated against for the simple reason that they adhered to a different faith. It needed, however, some educated young men with a burning patriotic zeal to carry this message to the Muslim masses, but there was no one to play the role in the absence of a modern education system, which developed in the state only after the British intervened during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The colonial compulsions, dissatisfaction with the behavior of Dogra rulers, persuasion of some guilt conscious British liberals, and the emerging currents of nationalism in British India forced the British rulers in India to reconsider its policy of non-interference in Kashmir affairs during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was only after British intervention in the state that the concept of 'reformation'

was forced on reluctant Dogra rulers.. On 25 February 1880, the viceroy, Lord Lytton, wrote to Secretary of State Lord Cranbrook:

I consider that time has come when we must decisively intervene for the rescue of a perishing population, on whose behalf we certainly contracted moral obligations and responsibilities when we handed them over to the uncontrolled rule of a power alien to them in race and creed, and representing no civilization higher than theirs.⁴³

Cranbrook promptly conceded:

that [while] we are not directly responsible but we have relations with Cashmere which would justify strong interference with their enormities and the use of a tone which ought to have its effect. . . . We ought to have influence to prevent the annihilation of a race whose only crime is different religion from that of the powers in authority.⁴⁴

The context was thus set. Maharaja Pratap Singh was allowed to succeed his father, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, on strictly defined conditions of introducing an internal reform project in his state. However, it was no accident that Pratap Singh became the object of colonial contumely. His reign coincided with a period of contesting the legitimacy of colonial presence in the face of a growing onslaught from the newly emerging popular nationalist sentiments in British India supervised by the newly emerged middle class created through colonial agency of modern education. Therefore, employing a strategy for survival in an age when the 'national idea' and popular national movements were increasingly widespread, dynasts aspired to make themselves more 'representative' of their subjects.⁴⁵ But the difference in the case of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was that the need for 'reformation', far from being voluntarily realized and produced by its autocratic rulers, came from an external stimulus of a British paramount power.⁴⁶ Probably, there was no such strong pressure of 'national idea' within, considering the highly regimentalized state apparatus. Undoubtedly, the British intervention was more motivated by its own colonial compulsions than by any 'good' of the people of the state.

Ian Copland has underlined the demands increasingly made, beginning already in the 1860s, from a British trading lobby as well as from 'the evangelical fraternity', for a change in the post-1857 revolt colonial state's decision to preserve India's princes. They were speaking

in a utilitarian tone in the interest of large numbers of Indians left beyond the pale of benign direct British rule. "Was it right", they said, "that some of India's people should prosper while others languished in poverty and ignorance and suffered oppression just because they happened to be subjects of a dependent Prince".⁴⁷

The first justification for an intervention came when in 1877 'some unknown Kashmiris' had submitted a memorandum to the viceroy, Lord Lytton (1831-91) underlining their plight in an insensitive political ecosystem created by the Dogra rulers. The accusations of maladministration levied in the memorandum were of the gravest character; the most serious charge made was that "in order to save the expanse of feeding his people" the maharaja, Ranbir Singh, had preferred to drown boatloads of Muslims in Wular Lake, situated in northeastern Kashmir. The British government, using these allegations as an excuse, appointed a commission of inquiry to look into the allegations. It is not surprising that in a highly regimented state, Kashmir Muslims had been too frightened to come forward to provide corroborations or to claim the ownership of the memorandum.⁴⁸ Although the maharaja was exonerated at the time, the outrage aroused by this advertisement of the shocking condition of the valley's Muslims called for some measure of intervention by the colonial government. The devastating famine of 1877-79 also prompted a serious reconsideration of the colonial policy of non-interference in Kashmir. The Kashmir *Durbar's* attitude during the famine had again demonstrated its unwillingness and inability to rise above the preferential treatment of its Hindu subjects to the detriment of Muslim cultivators who were the greatest sufferers.

However, the final impetus for the installation of a watchdog, Resident, in the state came after the Anglo-Afghan war of 1878, which made control over the northwestern boundaries of the British Empire more urgent than ever.⁴⁹ In 1884 the viceroy, Lord Ripon, strongly argued: "the appointment of a Resident in Kashmir was called for" both not only "by the need for assisting and supervising administrative reforms" but also to obviate disturbance on the Afghan frontier.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the British were not in any haste to intervene in the state affairs, at least during the lifetime of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. Thus, in August 1884, the Foreign Department of the government of India instructed the Officer-on-Special-Duty in Kashmir that "so long as Maharaja Ranbir Singh is alive, the Government of India do not propose to make any change in their existing policy. . . [avoiding] anything which is calculated in the maharaja's present state of health unnecessarily to disturb his mind".⁵¹ The reason behind this cautious

approach was the emerging threat of expansionist Russia and apprehension that any hasty intervention in border state of Kashmir affairs may push the maharaja to the enemy's side. The death of Ranbir Singh in 1885 encouraged the British to take advantage of Pratap Singh's resultant political insecurity and to impose its conditions on him for upholding the principle of primogeniture in the succession.⁵² The condition was, of course, one which the new maharaja would be given no opportunity to decline, and the reforms indicated included the conversion of the officer on special duty into a full-fledged and all-powerful British Residency in Kashmir. The government of India impressed on the maharaja "the necessity for consulting (Resident) at all times, and following . . . (his) advice".⁵³ Hence, Sir Olivier St. John was appointed as the first Resident with unbridled powers. That was not enough. The powers of the Residency were further enhanced after Pratap Singh was divested by the British government of his powers to govern on 17 April 1889, after he was allegedly accused of conducting treasonable correspondence with Tsarist Russia and of plotting the assassination of the Resident in Kashmir, and also of his own brothers, the Rajas Ram Singh and Amar Singh. He was instructed to abdicate his powers in favor of a State Council, whose members were to be appointed by the government of India. However, he was allowed to continue as a shadow chief of the state,⁵⁴ and it was only in 1905 that he was again restored with full authority.⁵⁵ This dual mastery over the people of Kashmir was reminiscent of the initial years of the East India Company's rule over Bengal in the mid-eighteenth century, when the local ruling class was given responsibility without authority and the colonial master had unchecked authority without any responsibility toward the subject population.

In any case, the appointment of a Resident in state was a necessary prelude to the implementation of overdue and wide-ranging reforms in the Dogra state. These include the introduction of a modern and salaried bureaucracy staffed by qualified individuals, a system of proper financial control, improvements in the judicial administration, reformation in the revenue administration, development in communication, and progress in modern education, besides other things. Although these reforms were not enough to change the feudal nature of the state, and even in most of the cases added to the miseries of the people, as will be shown below, the changes were sufficient enough to break the *status quo* by creating a section of society who later spear-headed an anti-feudal movement under the leadership of a firebrand, Sheikh Abdullah, to contest the legitimacy of the state to rule over an unwilling population and without their consent.

Imperial interests apart, the government of India was anxious to replace the feudal structure of the state by a modern bureaucratic form of administration. With this purpose in view, the British Resident began to interest himself through the State Council in starting and organizing all the departments dealing with different branches of administration.⁵⁶ Accordingly, the system of departmentalization was introduced with a view to bring about an integrated system of administration.⁵⁷ But there was a difficulty in making these endeavors a success. As the contemporary Prem Nath Bazaz observed, "there were few local men with the requisite qualifications available to do the jobs and fewer schools and no colleges into state where the citizens could have been educated for the task".⁵⁸ Thus, people were imported from British India, particularly the Punjabi Hindus, and Englishmen recommended by the British government to staff different branches of the administration. This move frustrated Kashmiri Pundit community in particular, for government service was traditionally their main profession in Kashmir. As Bazaz complained:

armies of outsiders trailed behind the offices from the plains with no more interest than to draw as much as they could, and then to depart leaving behind their kindred as successors to continue the drain; and thus was established a hierarchy in the services with the result that profits and wealth passed into the hands of the outsiders and the indigenous subjects lost enterprise and independence.⁵⁹

Kashmiri Pundits whose "favorite occupation" was state service,⁶⁰ were, needless to say, unhappy with this state of affairs, and soon they campaigned to regain their position in Kashmir's bureaucracy.⁶¹ Strengthening his lines with the most privileged segment among his subjects and promoting their interests was particularly advisable if Pratap Singh was to counter the increased powers of the State Council and the Resident, both backed by the imperial government. Thus, in 1897, he criticized the State Council for filling the higher rungs of the state bureaucracy with 'aliens' at the expense of the natives of Kashmir (undoubtedly Pundits) and the Dogras.⁶² Later, between 1895 and 1912, when his powers were to be restored, Singh issued some orders directing his government that for the administrative departments, "subjects of the State should be given preference".⁶³ Of course it was to secure the social base which he was creating among the 'influential sections' of society. It is pertinent to mention here that there was no reaction among the majority of the state's subjects, i.e. Muslims,